

U. S. Agency For International Development

STOCKTAKING OF REFORMS
IN
AGENCY PROGRAM OPERATIONS

REPORT ON
USAID/W FOCUS GROUPS
AND
INTERVIEWS

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STOCKTAKING OF REFORMS FOCUS GROUPS

I. INTRODUCTION

The stocktaking/diagnostic began in November 1997 to provide an assessment of the implementation and impact of the reforms in Agency operations. The effort was intended to guide senior management decisions on actions to clarify, refine and accelerate reform and realize the Administrator's vision of a reinvented, more effective USAID. A stocktaking study team, drawn from PPC/CDIE and PPC/ROR and assisted by CDIE's Research and Reference Services, and external advisors, was formed to gather and assess information centering on four outcome areas. These outcome areas were designed to capture the fundamental results expected from the reforms. The outcome areas are 1) empowered staff and teams accountable for results, 2) addressing development needs through customers and partners, 3) results-oriented decision-making, and 4) responsive and flexible approaches for achieving. The reengineering stocktaking team used three methods for gathering information to contribute to a snapshot of the impact of the reforms and the state of the Agency's program operations system. The three methods are a survey, documentation review, and focus groups and interviews.

Survey - The survey was based on a results framework for changing operations. It was based on indicators and defines a baseline (the current state) for managing change for operations. Within the area of operations (and some other areas that interact with them) the survey identifies sub-areas for intervention and/or sub-areas for additional, targeted research/evaluation. It identifies recommended actions and best practices by frequency of mention. Within the list of recommended actions it identifies management options by frequency of mention to the extent that respondents see management of the change effort as an obstacle to implementing reforms. 580 people responded to the survey. 272 people were part of a random sample, 66 respondents were part of a targeted group, and 208 were self-selected. Interestingly, there was very little difference between the results of the random sample and the total respondents.

Document Review - The document review provides information on USAID's change efforts and reaction to these efforts. It also provides indicator data and additional insight for those "why" and "why not" questions raised by the survey. It contributes to recommended actions and identifies possible resources/best practices, including management options, to augment those generated by the survey. Seventy-three documents, (including evaluation reports, memorandums and minutes) were analyzed. Thirty-two of the documents were produced in Washington, 38 were from the regions or regional bureaus, and three were non-USAID documents.

Focus Groups and Interviews - Focus groups and interviews provide more in-depth perspectives on USAID's vision for the change effort and implementation program. They provide informed opinion on the current state for specific areas of intervention and on targeted sub-areas within operations.

This paper describes the methodology and findings of the focus groups and interviews. These sources of information were limited to exploring selected topics. Therefore, the findings presented below show only a very partial picture of the state of the reform efforts. The stocktaking synthesis report that combines this data with the analysis of the survey data and the document review provides a more thorough and complete perspective.

II. METHODOLOGY

The topics selected for the focus groups were NMS effectiveness, team effectiveness, results frameworks, Agency effectiveness for providing leadership for program operations reforms (two groups held), and program operations support for achieving/implementing. These focus groups were conducted in AID/W. Additional focus groups are currently being conducted with Agency partners; findings from those groups will be reported in a separate document.

Participants for the focus groups were either specifically invited or self-selected. The Stocktaking Team sent notices to some staff who were identified as being knowledgeable of a particular focus group topic. Other notices were sent to and circulated around the various bureaus and offices (particularly program offices) around the Agency to solicit other staff knowledgeable in program operations. These notices were sent with an invitation for staff to self-select for the sessions based on their interest and perceived knowledge of the topic.

Attendance at each focus group ranged from three to 13 staff. A total of 48 participants attended the six focus group sessions. Participants were primarily direct-hire staff, although some contractors with specialized expertise in the subject matter were also invited.

Each focus group session was approximately two hours in length and was conducted by two to three members of the Stocktaking Team acting as facilitators. The format of each session varied somewhat depending on the topic, but they generally followed a four step process (see Appendix A for more details on the format for each group). The participants were presented with a number of illustrative items to consider related to the focus group topic. Participants were first asked to describe what they believed was the Agency's vision for achieving reforms related to the topic. They were then asked to identify factors that contributed to the vision, and then factors that hindered it. Lastly, they were asked to identify suggestions and recommendations they would make for improvements.

In addition to the focus groups, a very limited number of interviews were performed and other relevant correspondence was gathered to provide other informed opinion on the reform efforts. That information is also included in this analysis.

The next session presents a summary of the main themes of each focus group. Appendix B contains more detailed notes of each session. Appendix C and Appendix D contain the focus group guide and the interview guide, respectively.

III. FINDINGS

A summary of comments of the focus group participants follows below. The information is organized by focus group, with items categorized within each group by the Stocktaking outcome areas. Within each area, there is a “snapshot,” describing the current state, “highlights,” describing items that have worked well, and “needs,” that participants identified for further action.

FOCUS GROUP: Effective Teamwork

Empowered staff and teams accountable for results

Snapshot:

Teams should be used appropriately and not to solve all problems.
Teams should have a purpose with the right mix of skills.
There are benefits to using teams, especially in managing for results.
It takes a long time to build high performing teams.
Sometimes, teams are a name change only.
In teams, people have the opportunity to enjoy work and create synergy.
Teams work where there is appropriate training.
Virtual teaming works in some instances, but needs improving.
There are pockets of empowerment that work.
Stovepipe authority to manage sometimes creates conflict.
There is a disconnect in teaming and the current incentives system.
Changes take time, could be 5 years to transition.
Tension between Washington and Missions on empowerment and teaming.
Teams are tied to old incentives system.

Highlights:

Teams are making the most of human resources and improve the decision-making process.
Teams are increasing impact on outcomes and enhances empowerment.
Teams are breaking down organizational barriers and fostering more cooperation.
Smaller Missions, with fewer resources, rely heavily on FSNs on teams.
The field has implemented teams more than Washington.
Virtual teaming allows time for input in writing, especially between Missions and Washington.
FSN empowerment does work where the structure is clear with a clear purpose.
Gradually missions are getting more comfortable working without guidelines from Washington.
There are some examples of how to effectively empower staff/teams.

Needs:

Need to explain that transition costs and changing from stovepipes takes about 5 years.
Need to define models for teams and when it is appropriate to use teams.
Need to define how teams can be structured.
Need to clarify how the right people with right mix of skills are included on teams.
Need to create clearer contracts with Assistant Administrators (AA).
Need resources for training, consultation and technical assistance.
Need examples/clarification on how to make virtual teaming work.
Need to clarify empowerment, delegations of authority and accountability.
Need to keep communications flowing between Washington and Missions.
Need to improve Washington and Missions relationships regarding virtual teamwork.
Need clear guidance and procedures for high performing productive teamwork.
Need sharing workshops and other methods to spread best practices.
Need answers to respond to the demand for implementation questions.
Need to clarify the R4 guidance and implementing questions.
Need to make personnel and operating systems congruent.
Need leadership to support risk taking and innovation and "walk the talk".
Need management to define and implement rewards and incentives to match culture.
Management needs to identify and clarify priorities and assure integration throughout the systems.
Senior management decides priorities and commits resources to achieve them.
Need to clarify double accountability now to both old and new systems.

Addressing development needs through customers and partners

Snapshot:

Customer and partner relationships are important.
It is not clear how contractors fit within reengineered concepts.
Participation of decision makers, customers and partners can be problematic if not managed.

Highlights:

Having partners and customers on teams makes "light bulbs go on."
The CELS broke down some of the old barriers for including customers and partners.

Needs:

Need better clarification on partner and customer participation on teams.

FOCUS GROUP: Leadership for Program Operations Reforms

(Comments from two groups)

Empowered staff and teams accountable for results

Snapshot:

Teams have taken hold in the field.

Missions, especially smaller ones, needed virtual teaming from Washington.

Not much change in the culture of the Agency.

Unclear vision or goals, baseline or targets defined for a vision.

Not everyone on board with team structures.

ADS contributed, but not sure how well or how deeply understood.

Incentives system out of sync.

SO teams may not really drive decisions due to earmarks, old structure, etc.

Highlights:

Short term goals were defined.

Needs:

Senior leadership should start to be models with hands-on, visible participation.

Need to allow access to the highest level of management.

Need a focused plan with a focused strategy.

Need guidance and training to close the gap between written policy and behavior.

Need clear, flexible ADS guidance and training opportunities.

Need decision makers to decide on team structure policy.

Need to fix human resources system, the incentives system and find incentives for leaders buyin.

Need to fix the evaluation system to be congruent with reforms intent.

Need to find better ways to delegate authority and empower teams and staff.

Addressing Development needs through customers and partners

Snapshot:

Customer service plans were driven by subject matter experts (SMEs).

There was a lack of coordination with stakeholders in general.

Partner involvement led to conflict of interest in procurement integrity and team concepts.

The notion that results drive the budget is not real.

Not really clear on how to involve partners.

Highlights:

The focus on partners and customers improved planning and service delivery in the field.

Needs:

Help USAID's stakeholders understand the reengineered way of doing business.

Help develop a congruent reporting system that includes stakeholder needs.
Need help in ways to involve partners and customers.
Senior management make a commitment to train internal staff and partners in practical work.

Results-Oriented Decision-Making

Snapshot:

The Business Area Analysis process for program operations was designed by staff.
The strategic planning and R4 processes are good for the Agency.
Program operations transition needs some work.
There are some issues with earmarks/politics versus performance.
The system can be rigid in some ways.

Highlights:

The procurement mandate created more competition and opportunity for better results.
Streamlining of the contracting process is happening in some ways.
The CELS introduced new relationships with partners, customers and broke down old barriers.
Efforts are being made to work more collaboratively with grantees.

Needs:

Review the reform process for identification and clarification of what is possible.
Define priorities, adopt a discipline about priorities and integrate throughout all systems.
Create a method for sharing best practices and generating recommended actions/procedures.
Need to create a forum for AAs and DAAs to talk about and make decisions about reforms.
Need Senior Management to decide objectives, how to proceed with reforms and resources.

Responsible and flexible approaches for achieving

Snapshot:

Problems with procurement, tracking, indicators, results framework
Problems with reporting, guidance, bilateral/regional issues, support SOs.
Problems with NMS hurt reengineering intent.
No central place in Washington to obtain information on/from CELs.
Field implementation occurred, but not in Washington.
Human resources issues not in place for reforms.

Highlights:

There are examples of streamlining procurement processes

Needs:

Need training and resources commitment.
Need to improve procurement process.
Need to resolve and/or fix the issues with NMS.
Need to use mechanisms like RFNET to achieve consensus on best practices.

Need to build feedback loops from bottom up to Administrator and vice versa.
Need to adjust human resources systems to assist with effective achieving of results.

FOCUS GROUP: Results Frameworks (RF)

Addressing development needs through customers and partners

Snapshot:

There has been an initial retreat from including partner contributions in RF.
Missions sometime use buy-in by partners and customers to gain influence with AID/W.
Mission/partner/customer consensus may be countered by political/foreign policy agendas.

Highlights:

RF is somewhat useful for bringing partners into the planning process

Results-Oriented Decision-Making

Snapshot:

RFs not being used well to prioritize a Mission's programs and to make resource decisions.
Resources are not tied very well to RF management.
Funds are fungible, but become inflexible when assigned to IRs.
Inconsistent quality/timeliness standards for performance information among bureaus leads to data gaps and other problems in the system.

Highlight:

RF is used to manage for results by using it to change directions if something goes wrong.
RF is used as a planning tool.
RFs used somewhat effectively for consistency in decision making.
When resources cut, RF used successfully in understanding/cutting back programs.

Needs:

Need lessons from OUs on using RFs as a management tool and for making decisions.
Need to think through relationship of budget to strategic planning.

Responsible and flexible approaches for achieving

Snapshot:

A good RF is large/complex and cannot be easily shared.
Building a RF is time intensive; shrinking resources means making them work is difficult.
Staff lack knowledge/skills to use RFs appropriately.
Time-line for completing strategies forces OUs to cut short consensus building process.
Missions are creating large multi-dimensional SOs to counter AID/W guidance on limited SOs; some of the logic linking results is then lost.

There is a disconnect between the RF, activities, and RPs.
A disconnect exists between RF and contracts/grants.
RFs are flexible until they are in a contractual mechanism, when they become rigid.
Operations module in NMS is not being widely used.
Reporting focuses on annual expectations, detracting from longer-term development focus.
Structures of R4s and other reporting requirements create a rigidity in RFs.

Highlights:

Individual/Mission Director/Senior Management commitment makes RF work.
CELs contributed to making them work.
In spite of AID/W inconsistencies, it is used by Operating Units.
RFs are used well to the extent they are useful to Missions.
When there is consistency/understanding, then RF tends to be used effectively.
RFs used somewhat effectively for integration/synergy across SOs
RF provides opportunities for Missions to look at themselves.
Logic can be successfully carried down to level of project design/activity design.

Needs:

Need to produce clarity on RF concepts.
Need to create a home/method/process for resolving RF/planning issues
Need PPC leadership role to establish/apply/enforce criteria (using ADS).
Need to make RFs serve the need of development professionals/not the inverse.
Need systemic training.
Need to provide consistent TA on Results Frameworks across all OUs/Regions.
Need to send a message from the top of Senior level management buy-in.

FOCUS GROUP: Program Operations Support

Empowered staff and teams accountable for results

Snapshot:

Unclear who is accountable for results: results are long-term but career assignments are short-term.
The team approach is not working in Washington.
Roles for personnel have changed from specialists to generalists. People (in the field) have a wider range of roles and wider understanding of development.

Highlights:

The team concept is used in field from idea to implementation.
The participation of specialists on teams has increased their contribution.
Some powers have been delegated to FSNs.

Needs:

Need to get human resource (HR) management in order to support roles and workloads.
Need to put SO Teams in the driver's seat.

Results-Oriented Decision-Making

Snapshot:

Earmarks and political realities fly in the face of SO strategies and team authority.
Hard and soft earmarks squeeze out resource flexibility.
The rule of only one SO per area (e.g., health) results in Missions broadening SOs, causing various problems with the system.
Agency planning and reporting requirements don't fit BHR realities.
There is a tension between more rigor demanded by reengineering and common sense. There is a lot of money going into measurement that might be better spent on programs. Major decisions are as often made based on external contingencies as on results.
Few Missions are using a complete Results Framework.
There appears to be less program analysis going on.

Highlights:

The use of Results Frameworks, performance monitoring and the Results Review process has forced people to think more strategically.
The general mindset has moved from counting inputs toward results.
There is a more holistic approach as opposed to an array of small projects.

Needs:

Need to negotiate a clear contract with The Hill on earmarks.
Need to change the budgeting and results reporting parameters to emphasize planning and long-term results.
Need to meet information needs of O.U.s for useful/practical guidance.
Need to develop the 3rd tier of the ADS called Supplemental Reference.
Need to get Operating Unit level involvement in problem solving with Sr. Management.

Responsible and flexible approaches for achieving

Snapshot:

NMS doesn't work and isn't being used.
Accountability for results is being pushed down to the level of the contractor/grantee.
Procurement rules are not yet in synch with the new system.
There's nothing to fill the documentation void left by the new system.
There is no link between field activities and Results Frameworks, no logic among activities.
The notion that obligations are flexible is contradicted by inflexibility at the activity level.
The lack of definition or guidelines means Missions must reinvent the wheel.
Empowerment requires tools/resources that currently do not exist.
Offices don't have time or expertise to do good strategic planning.
Teams, the NMS, participation, and new (poorly defined) requirements require more time to

do work in an era of declining resources.

Highlights:

Using the A&A part of the NMS for procurement has helped some folks.

In some offices there is more emphasis on performance based contracting.

Some Missions have delegated a \$25,000 warrant to SO Teams and it works if training provided with it.

PIDs and PPs are gone - some paperwork removed.

Can move some resources more easily with fewer paper requirements.

Elimination of PVO quarterly reports.

Needs:

Need to make or break the NMS and just use it for what works.

Need to make procurement work, including defining standards/options for flexibility.

Need to move on the A&A Task Force recommendations.

Need to create a centralized document management system and issue clear, simple guidance.

FOCUS GROUP: NMS

Due to the specificity of the topic for this focus group, no summary was completed. See Appendix B for the detailed notes of this focus group.

APPENDIX A

Areas of Inquiry for Focus Groups

1.NMS effectiveness (consider the following components of the NMS: A&A, OPS, Budget, AWACS with a special emphasis on results tracking)

1.1 Which components of the NMS (as implemented) have contributed to moving operations closer to the vision as described in the 1995 BAA Team Report? I.e., which are working? Why?

1.2 Which components of the NMS (as implemented) have hindered moving operations closer to the vision as described in the 1995 BAA Team Report? Which aren't working? Why not? Design, technical, organizational problems?

1.3 What needs to be done to move operations closer to the vision as described in the 1995 BAA Team Report? What are the priorities and appropriate sequence of actions?

2.Team effectiveness (consider the following team characteristics: power and authority, composition of members, leadership skills, team skills)

2.1 What has contributed to making teams effective? Can anybody think of experiences with effective teams? What made them effective?

2.2 What has kept teams from being effective? Can anybody think of experiences with ineffective teams? What made them ineffective?

2.3 What has to be done to make teams more effective? What are the priorities and appropriate sequence of actions?

3.Results Framework (RF) effectiveness for guiding decisions that affect actions for results (consider the quality of the information and research that feeds the RF design, the skill level of the designers, the quality of data the RF generates to feed decisions, decision maker confidence in the RF and its data, USAID's organizational culture and its support of the RF)

3.1 What has contributed to making the Results Framework an effective tool for guiding decisions that affect actions for results? Can anybody think of experiences when it worked? Why did it work?

3.2 What has kept the Results Framework from becoming effective? Can anybody think of experiences when it didn't work? Why didn't it work?

3.3 What needs to be done to make Results Frameworks more effective? What are the priorities and appropriate sequence of actions?

4. Agency effectiveness providing leadership for program operations reforms (consider the organizational change strategy to move USAID toward the reforms, leadership for the strategy, what parts of the strategy were implemented)

4.1 What contributed to moving the reforms forward? Who did what with whom when?

4.2 What were the obstacles to the reforms?

4.3 For the parts of the organizational change strategy that were implemented, what worked?

4.4 What didn't work?

4.5 What needs to be done to make operations reforms work?

What are the priorities and appropriate sequence of actions?

4.6 What can you or any individual do to make the reforms work?

5. Program Operations support for achieving/implementing (consider the such areas described in the ADS 200 series as: Responsibilities, Operating Unit Strategic Plans, Customer Service Plans, Results Frameworks, the Management Contract, Performance Monitoring Plans, Budget Submissions, the R4 Report and review.

5.1 Which components of the OPS have contributed to moving operations closer to the vision as described in the ADS 200 series? Which are working. Why?

5.2 Which components of the OPS have hindered moving operations closer to the vision as described in the ADS 200 series? Which aren't working? Why not? Design, technical, organizational problems?

5.3 What needs to be done to move operations closer to the vision as described in the ADS 200 series? What are the priorities and appropriate sequence of actions?

APPENDIX B

USAID/W Focus Group on Effective Teamwork

Summary of Themes

Use of Teams

- Teams tend to be seen as the model to solve all problems and they aren't. Its a question of appropriate use for the right tasks.
- There has been a proliferation of teams with memberships bestowed for no purpose or objective, a notion that everyone has to be a member, no closure or defined "life span." Sometimes teams seem to be generated out of fear of making decisions.

Recommendations:

- *Define models for teams and for when their use is appropriate to specific situations.*

Benefit of Teams

- Make the most of the human resources available.
- They capture a lot of lost information.
- Make the R4 manageable.
- Ensure Agency representation with members from various Bureaus (PPE).
- Provide clearer contracts for AA signature.
- Improve the decision making process through a wider number of people.
- Breakdown organizational barriers to create a more cooperative/collective effort.
- Create more ownership of activities across a wider number of people.
- Put fun back into the work. People enjoy work more and there is more synergy.
- Increase individual impact on outcomes.
- Push authority and decision making down.

Recommendation:

- *Explain that transition costs and changing from stovepipes to teams takes about 5 years.*

Team Structure

- It takes a long time to build permanent, strong teams and USAID has too many built-in changes in personnel. USAID teams are temporary work groups.
- The new (team) organizational structure creates a "learning organization" atmosphere.
- Smaller missions, with fewer resources, rely heavily on FSNs on teams.
- Office teams work where the team leader is skilled, trains the team and includes key people. It changes the culture of the office and creates a positive attitude through effective leadership.
- Team structures are artificial because they are imposed on the old office system and the incentives are tied to the old system.
- Washington has changed in the direction of the team structure less than the field and the relationship of Washington/Field hasn't changed.

Virtual Teaming

- Virtual membership works in Washington for specific purposes: 1). as an oversight function for issue identification and to create targeted meetings on specific identified issues and 2). For A&A review to get valuable input. Requires persistence in asking for it and a good coordinator to manage the information flow.
- Virtual membership for specialists provides more efficient input because members provide input in writing and don't lose time in meetings. Participation in open meetings often results in lost time and the team concept loses meaning.
- Virtual membership on the EEF Panel doesn't work because it's new and hasn't been tried yet. We need options for how to do it.

Empowerment

- There are pockets of empowerment that work.
- Having authorities as members expedites work.
- Teams are not always as much fun with the authorities (decision makers) present on the team, but without them sometimes it's hard to get closure.
- In some cases Operating Unit empowerment has worked and Missions have successfully "pushed back" on Washington.
- FSN empowerment does work where the team structure is clear and with clear authorities.
- There is a low level of trust/empowerment of teams.
- There is still a limited delegation of authority to FSNs.
- Empowerment requires Mission definition rather than demand for Washington guidance. Gradually, Mission staff are getting more comfortable working without specific guidelines from Washington.
- The contradiction of preaching teams and using stovepipe authority to manage creates a conflict and undermines credibility. In many cases teams are a name change only.
- Team power and authority is limited by that of the Agency in its relationship to State and the Hill.

Recommendations

- *There is double accountability now to both the old and the new systems and we need resources for training, consultation and technical assistance to make it work.*

Stakeholders, Customers and Partners Involvement

- Having partners and customers on teams makes "light bulbs go on".
- Participation of decision makers, customers and partners can be a problem if not managed right. It can limit open discussion or keep it far too broad to be useful.
- The effort towards "one voice" from Washington to the field is making progress. Some Bureaus see Missions as customers (especially in the R4 process). Boundaries are better defined and more listening is going on.

Teamwork

- A team charter helps identify team boundaries, purpose, clear expectations, both within and without the team.
- With good team leadership the team uses an agenda, has defined roles, uses member and

outside input efficiently. Members and visitors come prepared to meet objectives, hold to time lines and produce.

- Sometimes its hard to get a critical mass in the room at one time to make decisions.
- There is confusion about consultants' roles on teams, about how and when they are used and what role they play.

Guidance (Automated Directives System - ADS)

- We experience difficulty letting go of old projects for new activities. There is a lack of guidance and lots of gaps.
- The ADS is creating systems that drive behavior; the behavior is not driven by the vision behind the systems. Example: customer service is a document on a shelf.

Training

- The demand for guidance has decreased, but that for training and answers to implementation questions has increased.

Recommendation:

- *R4 guidance may respond to some of the demand for implementation answers, but we need "sharing workshops" to identify and spread best practices.*

Reward/Evaluation System

- The incentives for team participation are largely personal not institutional: personal development, better background information, involvement and participation in "making a difference", public recognition for a job well done.
- Teams are tied to the old incentives system.

Recommendations:

- *Make Personnel (Human Resource Management) System and OPS system congruent. Structure teamwork into the performance evaluation. Provide individual recognition for good team facilitation versus supervision. Reward people for doing it right and publicize it. Create a parallel performance evaluation system for USDH and FSNs with objectives included.*
- *Support risk taking/innovation in teams: leadership models it, leadership rewards it.*
- *Recognize Missions that demonstrate core values and that "stopped doing something".*
- *Management defines the path for incentives.*

Communications

- Some folks are unaware or don't use "On Track" or RF Net.

Recommendation:

- *Keep the communications flowing on what is being done to implement reforms and the results.*

**USAID/W Focus Group on
Agency Effectiveness: Leadership for Program Operations Reforms**

Summary of Themes

Program Operations Transition

- The Business Area Analysis process for program operations was designed by internal staff and Subject Matter Experts.
- Streamlining of the contracting process happening.
- The CELS introduced new relationships with partners, teams, customers, and broke down some of the old barriers among internal work groups.
- A procurement mandate to create more competition and contract for results with tighter mechanisms lead to increased use of IQCs. That meant increased use of contracting companies and less use of PVOs. Efforts are now being made to get the same results through PVO grants.

Recommendation:

- *Review the reform process for identification and clarification of what is possible. Define priorities, adopt a discipline about those priorities, and integrate them throughout all the systems.*
- Create a space and fora for AAs and DAAs to talk about reforms and problems.
- Create a method for sharing best practices and generating recommended actions/accept procedures.

Strategic Planning

- The Strategic Plan, Management Contract and R4 Process forced Missions to do Results Frameworks and to report on results.
- Strategic planning suffered uneven implementation and stopped at the point of a meaningful link between activities and Results Frameworks. The Management Contract and Strategic Objective Strategy were in place, but the Activity level and Results Packages were not developed or handled well.
- There was no coherent strategy framework really, first because the Agency strategic framework is so all encompassing, and second, because Missions built a strategy tent to cover the old encampments.
- Country level strategy development mitigates against coherent regional approaches. For example, a "Green Revolution" in Africa like the one in Asia is difficult to organize.

Recommendations:

- *Senior Management decides on a limited number of objectives for the Agency (decides priorities) , then for reengineering and commits the resources to achieve them.*
- *Use the Inspector General to monitor progress/compliance with (achievement of) reengineering objectives, especially in non-presence countries.*
- *Treat earmarks as Special Objectives, not necessarily related to a strategy*

Teams

- Teams have taken hold in the field.

NMS

- Resources committed to NMS and some to training.
- Parts of the budget are run through the NMS.
- A non-functioning NMS and incomplete MACS led to no accrual accounting.
- Pushed NMS in spite recommendations from those working on it. We have two systems as a result until the problems are resolved.
- The NMS became the focus for the effort and its problems hurt reengineering in general.

Recommendations:

- *Fix NMS*

Washington/Field Operational Issues

- There was no receptacle in Washington for information from the Country Experimental Labs (CELS).
- Multiple requests from Washington for the same thing
- Field implementation occurred, but no Washington implementation.
- Missions (especially small ones) needed virtual membership from AID/W on teams, but it never happened.
- Washington was not reengineered. Project Officers and Managers in the field continue to work in isolation from AID/W.

Culture Change

- Reform was seen as a response to a political problem and it appeared more important to be perceived as doing something to respond to the NPR movement and outside criticism, than to know the direction we were headed. Appearance was more important than substance.
- There was transition plan from the old to the new.
- Strategies change to fit the individual imprint of newly arrived managers.
- Leadership created a norm of "no criticism" of the reform process.

Recommendation:

- *Senior leadership should start to be models with hands-on, visible participation and allow access to the highest level.*
- *Use the RF NET to achieve consensus on best practices.*
- *Harvest information from the CELS (both success and failures).*
- *Build in feedback loops from the bottom to people at the top and from the Administrator down.*

Vision/Goals

- No clear vision of the end stated.
- There was no baseline or targets defined for the vision.
- The AA/M's departure left a vacuum with goals unfulfilled.

- Short term goals were defined.

Guidance (Automated Directives System - ADS)

- The ADS contributed but not sure how well or how deeply understood.

Recommendation:

- *Given a plan with a focused strategy, provide guidance and training to close the gap between written policy and behavior. Guidance should include written material, sharing sessions, and training.*

Addressing Stakeholders, Customers and Partners

- Customer service plan driven by SMEs.
- The focus on partners and customers improved planning and service delivery in the field.
- There was a lack of coordination with stakeholders in general.
- Congress never got on board with reporting by Strategic Objectives and insisted on project reporting
- Partner involvement in planning led to problems of procurement integrity and led to core versus expanded team concepts.
- External stakeholders (Congress) has not bought into the notion that results should drive funding decisions. Ear marks continue to mandate funding independent of results reporting. The notion that results drive the budget is not real.

Recommendations:

- *Get Congress and other stakeholders on board with the focused strategy, a reengineered way of doing business and with a congruent reporting system that includes stakeholder needs.*

Human Resources Management

- Human Resources never got on board with the team structure; HR's system not in place.
- Promotions continued to be based on written records, and the information from 360 degree evaluations didn't enter those records.
- Rationalize the personnel system so it supports reengineering. Change policies that are contradictory to reforms and change incentives to support them.
- Find incentives for AAs to adopt reforms, to work across Bureau lines and across lower level boundaries. Then integrate those into the performance evaluation plans.

Recommendations:

- *Reorganize Human Resources, including personnel evaluation, to support Senior Managements priority objectives.*
- *Focus on procurement personnel to position them as accountable to the Agency to serve and its mission.*

Reward/Evaluation

- The AEF is not organized to support reengineering, moreover, where in the R4 does risk taking get credit? It's talked about, but there are no incentives.

Recommendation:

- *Tie individual and/or team awards to the level of risk-taking exhibited.*

Empowerment

- SO teams don't really drive decisions, other factors do (e.g. the inertia of existing projects, earmarks, the old decision making structure under a "team name")

Recommendation

- *For smaller (5 person) Missions that require Washington virtual team membership, the SO Team in the field should control decision making, not the Washington Bureau.*

Training

- Training did not keep pace with new procedures and as Missions did not know how to involve NGOs, they made it a bureaucratic task for USAID/W reporting.

Recommendation:

- *Make a commitment to training internal staff and partners. Create training programs that tie reengineering concepts to what the Agency does, i.e. translate the values into what they mean for doing practical work, how to write a scope of work for a contract.*

Focus Group
Stock Taking Focus Group on Results Frameworks (RF)
Tuesday, January 20, 1998

(11 participants from PPC, AFR, ANE, ENI, and G bureaus)

ISSUES

Working with Partners

- * Useful for getting USAID staff together with partners. Downside is USAID/W timeline drives it and it becomes internal. Less than 1/2 Missions are really involving partners. (Some are)
- * Results Frameworks have been used somewhat effectively in bringing partners into the process, integration/ synergy across SO, consistency in decision making.
- * Partner involvement -- there has been an initial retreat from doing this and a movement back to using only USAID \$ backed partners.
- * In AFR the Results Frameworks don't show activities or results that have been accomplished by partners.
- * Missions use buy-in by partners and customers to gain influence with AID/W.
- * Mission/partner/customer consensus may be countered by political agendas. Competing interests make it not work.

Strategic Integration

- * Opportunities for Missions to look at themselves. Integration/synergy among SOs within a Mission. Less than 1/2 using it for that purpose. (Some are)
- * Some use cross-cutting issues : D&G across results framework. (Example of synergy)
- * AID/W guidelines on the limited number of SOs lead Missions to create multi-dimensional SOs to house all their activities. The result is huge, generic, multi-sector SOs
- * USAID/Mexico suffers from the above condition at the SO level. IRs are not causal. IRs are reworked at the lower level to match the badly structured SO.

Activity-Level Issues

- * Logic successfully carried down to level of project design/activity design.
- * The RF works at the activity level, in place only 2 years.
- * There is a lack of relationship among the RF, Activities, and RPs.
- * There is a disconnect between RF and RPs
- * Activities across IRs confuse \$ budgeted and expended. That limits its use as management tool
- * Program level strategic planning is going to have problems in an activity level contracting structure.

NMS

- * Missions have RFs developed at levels far below what's in the NMS.
- * Strategic Plans in the NMS ? Not yet in the NMS. What % have done it? Hasn't seen a Results Framework that goes below the SO level.

Managing for Results/Decision Making

- * It is used to manage for results, by using it to change directions if something goes wrong.
- * It is used more as a planning tool.
- * Need information on the extent to which people/Missions are using RFs as a management tool, and are making decisions with the RF in mind.
- * Consistency in decision making
- * Missions' independent decision making (from AID/W). Synergy among SOs.
- * Using a RF to prioritize a mission's programs and to make \$ decisions is not always done well

General Application/Use of RF

- * What makes it work is individual commitment, Mission Director commitment, Senior Management commitment -- that varies among Bureaus and Missions.
- * CELs contributed to making them work.
- * In spite of AID/W inconsistencies, it is used by operating units.
- * RFs are used well to the extent they are useful to Missions: for AID/W Relationship/Program Management.
- * If there is consistency (universal understanding), then it tends to be used more effectively.
- * Good use related to quality of understanding.
- * Framework of assumptions; not results
- * Quality/timeliness of information for Results Frameworks by operating units are up to offices and bureaus to enforce and inconsistent application leads to having to deal with data gaps and with the consequences of how that affects the system.
- * RF is not a living document because of too many internal inconsistencies. "A good one is too big; can't share it, except for very simplified versions that focus on the highest levels.
- * Time intensive to build it right. With shrinking resources there is no time to make RFs work.
- * Lacking the knowledge/skills to use RFs appropriately, staff become mechanics for applying the rules and that creates dependent thinking.
- * Time line forces Missions to stop time-hogging consensus building.

Recommendation: *Produce clarity on simple concepts - Create a method for proceeding on /resolving issues (including issue of single focus SOs to focus the Agency's and Missions' agendas.)*

Recommendation: *Make RFs serve the need of development professionals/not the inverse.*

Recommendation: *Systemic training. Provide consistent TA on Results Frameworks across all OUs/Regions.*

Resources

- * When resources are cut the RF has been used successfully in understanding /cutting back programs. ENI used the RF in such a manner; the Mission Director wanted to use the RF to justify and prioritize his programs.
- * Resources (not) tied to RF management
- * "Fungible" funds but inflexible assignment to IRs.

Recommendation: *Think through relationship of budget to strategy planning. Fix the attribution problem.*

Procurement

- * There is a disconnect between contracts (\$ inputs) and results. (NMS).
- * The RF sometimes drives contracting structures instead of the real work objectives.
- * A disconnect exists between RF and contracts/Grants (contracting) which makes tracking \$ (funding) difficult. That increases USAID's internal workload.
- * Contracts are frozen in time. RFs are flexible until they are in a contractual mechanism. The resulting rigidity is counter productive because it stifles the analytical thought process which is one of the backbones of the Results Framework process.

Reporting

- * AID/W report driven (R4) Game -- it's not management and not reporting.
- * When RF becomes a report driven process as in the R4, then nothing is gained.
- * Creates impact driven (annual) expectations in problem areas with long - term time lines. Driven by annual report when change make take years.
- * Expectations on reporting are not clear: It's not clear whether it is OK not to show results at higher levels on an annual basis.
- * The RF is a flexible planning tool but with a built-in inflexibility. The development process is supposed to be fluid and dynamic. The structures of R4s and other reporting requirements create a rigidity in RFs that shouldn't be there.

Overall recommendations for Agency Leadership on RFs

Recommendation: *Send a message from the top of Senior level management buy-in -- Administrator and AAs serve on SO teams.*

Recommendation: *Create a home for problem solving in USAID for interpretations/consistency. PPC leadership role to establish/apply criteria and support leadership in Bureaus to enforce application of criteria. Use ADS as 1st step.*

Other comments

- * The big picture (SO level) is not measurable yet; you would only be testing assumptions.
- * The SO level is defined only because the R4 process requires it.
- * PRISM terminology leads to program thinking: dressing old projects in new language.

Recommendation: *Go back to projects/log frames. Merge Log Frames and Results*

Frameworks -- create a synthesis. Make them (Log Frames) more permeable; break bounds of projects.

Focus Group
Program Operations Support
01/22/98

(13 participants from LAC, ENI, AFR, M, BHR, and G bureaus)

ISSUES

Budgeting/Reporting/Congress

- * The R4 process has limitations as a management tool: earmarks fly against the face of SO strategy and SO team authority. Political realities outweigh results. The R4 shares the same unreality that afflicts the SOs: How can you report on long term objectives on an annual basis?
- * Budgets are getting cut because earmarks squeeze out flexibility
- * USAID treats Legislative Report language as if it were law and tracks and reports on "earmarked" funds for which there is neither a legal nor program basis

Recommendation/Need: *Negotiate a clear contract with The Hill*

- *Reach agreement on reporting by SO, earmark or project*
- *Earmark is statutory authority, Report language is not; therefore USAID won't strictly adhere to "soft" earmarks where it doesn't make sense*
- *Get an exemption from GPRA requirements for earmarked funds or activities. Use ADS language on Special Objectives to handle them*
- *The architects of [soft] earmarks [those who write them and those who agree to respond to them] must take implementing Bureau input and requirements into consideration*

Recommendation/Need: *Change the budgeting and results reporting parameters*

- *More rigor on the up front planning*
- *A 3 to 5-year timeframe with a midterm review*
- *Report only on results when expected to mature within meaningful timeframes*

Human Resources

- * Roles for personnel have changed from specialist to generalist. People (in the field) have a wider range of roles and wider understanding of development
- * The participation of specialists on teams has increased their contribution, energy, and commitment
- * There has been a delegation of some powers to FSNs
- * It's not clear what accountable means: results are long term but careers are organized into short-term jumps from place to place. Who is accountable: the

person who started something and is not there to manage it or the manager who inherited it?

Recommendation/Needs: *Get human resource (HR) management in order*

- *Define the roles and workload of USAID Direct Hires. What are we doing and what is possible?*
- *Clarify whether we are strategic planners and managers of contractors*
- *Line up recruitment, hiring, and training to support the roles as defined*

NMS

- * Using the A&A part of the NMS for procurement has helped some folks
- * By and large the NMS doesn't work and isn't being used. The NMS expects a time schedule definition and too much precision for an organic process; this is unrealistic. There are too many variables.
- * There is a pipeline management problem: Controllers did MACS without an accounting of accruals expense because there was no match between MACS and NMS. MARDS were done by hand; not in the NMS

Recommendation/Need: *Make or break the NMS and just use it for what works*

Procurement

- * In some offices there is more emphasis on performance based contracting
- * Some Missions have delegated a \$25,000 warrant to SO Teams and it works if training provided with it
- * Accountability for results is pushed down to the level of the contractor/grantee. We stop the design task at the results level and pass the design task to the contractor. Not only is it "dishonest", we are delegating the "fun" part.
- * Procurement rules are not yet in synch with the new system

Recommendation/Need: *Make procurement work*

- *Clarify the "givens" and define standards/options for how flexibility works*
- *Move on the A&A Task Force recommendations*

Agency Leadership

- * As an Agency we suffer from inflated expectations created by passing Cold War expectations to macro level results.
- * The review process is not shrinking expectations to match reality
- * In summary, the system suffers from an unrealistic approach to applying a basically good idea: to produce results
- * Get Operating Unit level involvement in problem solving with Sr. Management

Recommendation/Need: *Meet immediate information needs of O.U.s*

- *Review existing ADS against 2 criteria: 1. does it meet a need, 2. is it practical?*
- *Develop the 3rd tier of the ADS called Supplemental Reference*

Program Documentation

- * PIDs and PPs are gone - some paperwork removed
- * Can move some resources more easily with fewer paper requirements
- * Elimination of PVO quarterly reports
- * There's nothing to fill the documentation void and we waste time trying to figure out the "new" rules. There is less risk taking than before

Strategic Thinking

- * The use of Results Frameworks, performance monitoring and the Results Review process has forced people to think more strategically
- * The general mindset has moved from counting inputs toward results
- * There is a more holistic approach as opposed to an array of small projects
- * The basic logic doesn't work: SO's are defined very broadly and as "more X" or "less Y" The rule of only one SO per area (i.e., health) forced Missions to broaden the SOs to encompass an array of projects. They are so broad that measurement is either impossible or too expensive. IRs became what the original intent was for SOs. Also, causal linkage turned out to be not as predictable or definable as assumed. The whole system assumes a level of precision we are not likely to achieve

Activity-level Problems with Strategic Planning

- * There is no link between field activities and Results Frameworks, no logic among activities. Rather than change activities to match a strategy, we did the opposite, which makes it difficult to use the strategy to ration resources
- * There are too many reasons (including political pressures) not to drop activities. It will take years to get activities congruent with strategies
- * The notion that obligations are flexible is contradicted by inflexible obligations at the activity level

Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement Shortfalls

- * The planning and reporting requirements don't seem to fit BHR realities and BHR is 40% of the budget. They seem designed for bilateral missions yet a lot of missions are non-presence or emergency. The same level of reporting may not be necessary for all. Among some PVOs, although quarterly reports were dropped, results monitoring/reporting increased their overall reporting workload
- * There is a tension between more rigor demanded by reengineering and common sense. There is a lot of money going into measurement that common sense might spend on programs. Major decisions are as often made based on external contingencies as on results. Stakeholders do not appear to appreciate the rigor and may not expect it. Producing the level of rigor seems to be consultant dependent and may not be sustainable by USAID staff without consultants
- * Few Missions are using a completed Results Framework. Getting money is

tied to the SO, so it's in place. For most Missions, the rest of results tracking (based on the RF) is partial/limited

- * Although the process may be shortened from idea to implementation with less duplication of analysis and paperwork, there also appears to be less analysis, period

Time and Resource Constraints

- * The lack of definition or guidelines has increased time loss, as staff in each Mission must reinvent the wheel
- * Offices have neither the time nor the expertise to do strategic planning. For sustainable reporting, it must be done by staff.
- * Empowerment needs both authority and tools/resources to work and has not really worked for lack of the latter
- * The formulae for workload/personnel cuts/streamlining haven't worked and the result is real limitations on personnel and time. Staff can't focus on results management. The 2-year OYB budget process is a [time consuming] bureaucratic nightmare
- * There is a proliferation of teams and each requirement of the new system doubles the time required to do the work. Managing partners and customers is time intensive; introducing the NMS resulted in carrying double accounting systems

Other Recommendations/Needs:

- * Create a centralized document management system and issue clear, simple guidance.
- * The team approach has not worked in Washington; Washington folks focus on their specialty
- * Put SO Teams in the driver's seat
- * The team concept is used more in the field, bringing the right skills to the right stage from idea to implementation.

NMS Focus Group
January 7, 1998

Structure

Agenda

Vision of NMS

What aspects of NMS are working to support program operations?

What aspects are not working? Why? Why not?

What needs to be done to get NMS working to support program operations?

Aspects defined:

Modules: A&A, Operations, AWACS, Budget
Technology
Organizational issues

Handout: BAA Analysis Team Report Synopsis (Vision)

Vision

integrated system that eliminates duplication created by stovepipe system
single source data entry
corporate data information network with access by all to the same information
more flexibility
information system with equal access that supports more equality and
facilitates teamwork
system facilitates world-wide communication among component parts
of USAID
financial data system that produces the same answer to a question
no matter who answers it in USAID
streamlined, paperless procurement system that reduces procurement/
payment process and time invested
built in clarity and accountability that permits more delegation and an
easier way to do business
standard reports that serve customers and stakeholders from Bureaus
to Congress
reduce the need for procurement and financial specialists
directly links financial data (system) with development results
holds individuals (in groups) accountable

What works

no longer have to prepare Program Review Requests (?) to distribute OYB allowance process is a bit more transparent (at least in ENI). Can see allowance amounts at the SO level and then distribute them to activities in the field
single data entry sort of works
we are close to unified reports but there are questions whether they all contain the same information, do they roll up correctly, are they useful
OPS module could work if we could get staff to enter the data on results and indicators
R4 data could be used. The data are there but not entered in the system

What is not working

for the NMS to function as envisioned, there has to be standardization. For example: there is no one definition of an activity and it is the foundation for much of the system. PPC, other Bureaus, I.G, LPA, IT all have different definitions and models for what they are. It is a complex concept and not adequately articulated. There may have to be some variation among Bureaus because of basic differences, such as ENI being in a close-out mode.
there is no standardization module to module
even given standardization, much information and data will have to be retrofitted. ANE experienced the problem of fitting old activities into new structures.
ENI experienced the problem of tracking financial information by activity and I.G. auditors requesting it by project. Forward funding guidelines were not standard and the auditors disabled the power to obligate funds. The problem greatly complicated the procedures and time invested to obligate through circuitous means.
information in the system is not up to date and therefor creates an access problem
the AWACS/Budget component suffers redundancy in procedures and complicated loops. Saving data takes too long. Security controls make the system dependent upon long time commitments of both personnel time and that of the system s/he is on.
taking the system off-line split some Mission personnel into camps with morale problems and happy campers relieved that the burden was lifted. People who tried to make the system work ended up punished for their efforts.
the OPS module is limited by the fact that one cannot use the Management Contract to input data
the NMS is designed for bilateral programs and a lot of Missions are limited, non-presence, and non-NMS sites
reports from FM state that emphasis area coding at input was wrong and FM

made adjustments. The source of the original data has no way of accessing or generating reports to check the validity of FM judgments. There is also no way to take several cuts on the same data set to cross-check validity (including emphasis area coding) before inputting. Basically FM created the reporting system to meet their needs, not Bureau needs. a lot of agreements are not done in the NMS, generating incomplete information

doing an obligation for a Mission from Washington results in a double tracking system

data and information are not up to date in the system; even CD ROMs are out of date when they arrive

we do not know who is in charge; who is making decisions; who has authority need to standardize; e.g., re.: D.O.A. s

as new tools and procedures are developed, there is no way to share/standardize to slow the rate of reinvention of wheels and non-standard wheels. (Group not aware of RF Net nor On Track as resources)

everybody maintains parallel budgeting systems: one for the NMS and one to guard against an anti-deficiency ruling.

there was a decline in numbers of support staff and no training to assume those functions under the automated system

the ADS has limited exposure; the group doubted that 10% of staff have read it (it would be interesting to take a poll)

flexibility is severely limited by the proportion of a budget controlled by Congressional earmarks

R4 data are available but there is no one entering the data in the NMS

the level of effort to manage the transition from old to new (NMS) was underestimated

difficult to figure out which of the many problems to tackle first

A&A is the weakest module. The codes are inappropriate to USAID business. Only two or three codes fit and time is wasted figuring out funding codes to fit. Once you figure out a few they get used all the time which dilutes any meaningful output. There is a gap between what A&A will let you do and what you need to do. An example is field support: difficulty in tracking/transferring funds that originate in a Bureau and have to be transferred to G.

What else is not working (other than the NMS directly)

the team concept /emphasis has generated a lot more work (meetings and group tasks) with no reduction in other work along with a RIF

teams started their first year as a cross-cutting of stovepipes including CONT, RLA, Contracts, etc. The reorganization the second year put the techies in offices and called them a team. Participation from the other offices dropped off. It became a we-they thing.

training is one of the biggest bottlenecks. Anyone that knows something assumes an additional function of training others or it simply does not happen because there is no time. Big need for training in project design

and implementation; have not had any in years. Need ADS training. People changing functions need training, even experienced people. Need an incentive for people to take training.

a major let down was the failure to link NMS with the objectives of reengineering, with the way we do business. Most people think the NMS is what you operational people use. There is no focus on using NMS information to manage.

What needs to be done (priority order)

First: A/AID define who is in charge; who makes decisions on the NMS

Second: prioritize the modules to work on. OPS module should be first since it is the foundation of the system. It is close to working but still has bugs.

If OPS is selected by the person in charge as first priority, then these recommendations follow:

- the decision maker(s) get(s) a group of people together who know operations, the NMS, and the hassles of trying to move money around to produce cooperative (common) definitions, guidance, criteria. The first issue is the definition of an activity and the policy that defines it should be vetted with all Bureaus. IG will have to buy off on it as it affects how forward funding guidelines are applied.

- get the R4 process information into the NMS. (world-wide SOs, RFs, indicators, targets and results). Allow institutional contractors access to help input R4 information to reduce the burden on USAID staff.

- tie training by institutional contractors to development of the system (right training at the right time to the right folks). OPS users (USDH, FSN, PSC) need not just computer software training, but training in order to design, implement, monitor and manage for results.

- build the system user friendly to Operating Units so they can access information and generate reports that meet their needs

What else needs to be done (no defined priority order)

- allow users to delete requests that no longer make sense

- move graphics into results tracking software

- allow Bureaus to code OYB

- development work on A&A

- simplify the budget

- have one person in each Bureau who helps people manipulate data in the NMS

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Guide

Introduction

The Administrator asked the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC) and the Bureau for Management (M) to do an assessment or "stocktaking" of reengineering efforts in the Agency's program operations system. Tom Fox and Terry Brown are the sponsors of the Diagnostic/Stocktaking Team that is conducting the assessment in response to the Administrator's request. The Team's product will guide management decisions on USAID operations in coordination with recent input by the Acquisitions & Assistance Task Force, Workforce Planning Task Force, and the REFORM Initiative.

The Focus Group is one of four methods used to gather information for a "snapshot" assessment and recommended actions. The methods are: 1) an e-mail survey, 2) interviews (whether in person or on paper), 3) documentation review, and, 4) focus groups. The four methods, in combination, will provide a baseline measure of reform efforts and a distillation of ideas to move USAID forward. The assessment will be available via email and on USAID's website by 3/98.

Focus Group information *will be taken into account*. The following recommended structure will facilitate our task of the assimilation of ideas generated.

Recommended Structure

1. Review Attachment A, the "Food for Thought" list of descriptors of operations, organized under four ideal statements (or areas) of a vision for USAID. This list provides an overview of the components of an ideal operations system.

The four areas are:

- A. Empowered staff and teams accountable for results**
- B. Addressing development needs through customers and partners**
- C. Results-oriented decision-making**
- D. Responsive and flexible approaches for achieving**

If you want to conduct a focus group on one of the above four areas or on their components other than the 5 areas of inquiry listed below, please use the "Interview (and possible Focus Group) Guide," not this one.

2. Review Attachment B, the "Areas of Inquiry for Focus Groups" (a subset of the list mentioned above) which follow, and select one area appropriate for a particular group, or organize a group appropriate to the selected topic. The areas for inquiry are:

- 1. NMS effectiveness**
- 2. Team effectiveness**
- 3. Results Framework (RF) effectiveness for guiding decisions that affect actions for results**

4. **Agency effectiveness providing leadership for program operations reforms**
5. **Program Operations support for Achieving/Implementation**

3. Post the information from Attachment B regarding the area selected as an agenda. Follow the questions listed and document the responses.

4. Write up the responses, group them, and label them by the question number to which they relate. For example: material under the number 3.3 would pertain to question number 3.3 **What has kept the Results Framework from becoming effective? Can anybody think of experiences when it didn't work? Why didn't it work?** For the Area **Results Framework (RF) effectiveness for guiding decisions that affect actions for results.** The recommended outline for the write-up using Area 1 (NMS effectiveness):

Identification of Focus Group

****Agenda** - NMS effectiveness Questions 1.1 - 1.4 from Attachment B

****Participants** - List

****Venue** - Where/when

1.1 Vision

****Participant response about ideal NMS**

****Participant response...**

****Etc.**

1.2 What works

****Participant response about parts of NMS that work**

****Participant response...**

****Etc.**

1.3 What is not working

****Participant response about parts of NMS that aren't working**

****Participant response...**

****Etc.**

1.4 What needs to be done

****priority order**

Participants' agreement on what needs to be done to improve NMS

Participants' agreement...

****non-priority order**

Participants' agreement on what needs to be done to improve NMS

Participants' agreement...

Etc.

5. E-mail the numbered and grouped responses to: stocktaking@irt@aidw

Attachment A: Food for Thought

A. Empowered staff and teams accountable for results

- authority
- control of decision making
- control of resources
- delegation: Washington/operating unit./team/individual
- staff and team skill levels
- incentives and consequences
- tie to results

B. Addressing development needs through customers and partners

- role of partners and customers in:
 - planning
 - resource generation
 - implementing
 - monitoring
 - problem solving
 - achieving sustainable results
- customer service plan

C. Results-oriented decision-making

- role of data about results in:
 - planning (problem definition, strategy, implementation design)
 - resource allocation
 - implementation (contracts/grants)
 - monitoring and problem solving
 - human resource management
 - revising problem definition, strategy, implementation design, contracts/grants
- relationship of risk to results oriented decision-making

D. Responsive and flexible approaches for achieving

- ADS
- Customer focus and Service Plan
- The NMS
- Management Contract
- Participatory evaluations
- Performance-based contracts
- Performance monitoring and Monitoring Plan
- R4 Report and review
- Results driven evaluations
- Results Frameworks
- Results Packages
- Strategic Plan
- World-Wide Web

APPENDIX D

Interview (and possible Focus Group¹) Guide

Introduction

The Administrator asked the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC) and the Bureau for Management (M) to do an assessment or "stocktaking" of reengineering efforts in the Agency's program operations system. Tom Fox and Terry Brown are the sponsors of the Diagnostic/Stocktaking Team that is conducting the assessment in response to the Administrator's request. The Team's product will guide management decisions on USAID operations in coordination with recent input by the Acquisitions & Assistance Task Force, Workforce Planning Task Force, and the REFORM Initiative.

The following interview guide is one of four methods used to gather information for a "snapshot" assessment and recommended actions. The methods are: 1) an e-mail survey, 2) interviews (whether in person or on paper), 3) documentation review, and, 4) focus groups. The four methods, in combination, will provide a baseline measure of reform efforts and a distillation of ideas to move USAID forward. The assessment will be available via email and on USAID's website by 3/98.

Your information *will be taken into account*. The following recommended structure will facilitate our task of the assimilation of your ideas. Please review Attachment A, the "Food for Thought" list of descriptors of operations, organized under four ideal statements (or areas) of a vision for USAID. The four areas are:

A Empowered staff and teams accountable for results

B Addressing development needs through customers and partners

C Results-oriented decision-making

D Responsive and flexible approaches for achieving

After reviewing the next page please respond to the following five questions for each of the above areas to which you want to contribute.

Questions

1. How would you describe the original vision and benefits expected for the area?
2. What has helped move USAID toward the vision?
3. What has hindered moving USAID toward the vision?
4. What is/are the one/two priority action(s) USAID needs to take to move closer to the vision.
5. What else needs to be said?

To help us consolidate your information with that from other respondents, please label each response by letter (A,B,C,D) and number (1,2,3,4,5) for the appropriate area and question as per the attached chart. For example, **C.3.** is a response to question **3: What has hindered moving USAID toward the vision?** for ideal statement **C: Results-oriented decision-making.**

Email the numbered responses to: stocktaking@irt@aidw

¹see focus group guide